

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 1-F

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER  
18 MAY 1983

# Leader of fund for Soviet dissidents takes a stand and a risk for beliefs

By Donald Kimelman  
Inquirer Staff Writer

MOSCOW — Andrei Kistiyakovsky has trouble explaining why he decided to take on a task that seems so likely to land him in prison, but friendship played a big part, he says, as did religious faith. Somehow, it became his time to put his neck on the line for his convictions.

Kistiyakovsky is the new administrator of the Russian Social Fund, more commonly known as the Solzhenitsyn Fund, a philanthropic organization that distributes food and clothing to Soviet political prisoners and money to their dependents. Its major source of income are the royalties from exiled Soviet writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn's exhaustive account of the Stalinist prison system, *The Gulag Archipelago*.

It is unlikely that Kistiyakovsky, 46, a professional literary translator, had much competition for the job. All his predecessors have been sent to prison, exiled or forced to emigrate.

Although no time in the Solzhenitsyn Fund's nine-year history has been golden, the situation seems particularly perilous as Kistiyakovsky steps in.

On March 1, after 15 months in prison, the fund's Leningrad coordinator said on television that he had been a pawn of the CIA. Speaking of the "insights" he had gained while in captivity, Valery Repin, 32, contended that the fund had no charitable purpose but was directed toward "inciting anti-Soviet activity and collecting political and military information from spies."

On April 7, Sergei Khodorovich, the Moscow-based administrator of the fund for more than five years, was arrested and jailed. He reportedly has been charged with "disseminating knowingly false fabrications discrediting the Soviet political system."

Repin, whose wife made a televised confession in April, went on trial last week for treason. The *Tass* news agency has carried daily reports of the proceedings, all aimed at discrediting the fund and linking it to espionage activities. The degree of publicity being given to the case is unusual and is reminiscent, to some, of the infamous "show trials" of the 1930s, in which many of Joseph Stalin's perceived enemies were charged, pleaded guilty and executed with numbing speed.

The crackdown on the fund's leadership has provided further evidence of the Soviet regime's continuing hard line against dissent, a policy that has not eased since Yuri V. Andropov, a former chief of the KGB, the Soviet secret police, became party leader in November.

Yet despite its considerable success in stifling political and even spiritual independence, the regime has never been able to firmly close the lid. People such as Andrei Kistiyakovsky keep stepping forward to take the place of the latest fallen leader.

In an interview yesterday in his sparsely furnished Moscow study, Kistiyakovsky said that he had no illusions about the danger involved in taking the place of his good friend, Khodorovich.

"I don't want to be arrested," he said. "I think about it, however, and I don't think I'm afraid. Sometimes it happens that there are things more important than your personal freedom."

A slender man of medium height, with thick brown hair and a full mustache, Kistiyakovsky has been on the fringes of the dissident movement for several years. He has associated with people who have later gone off to jail or exile but he never has stepped so directly into the line of fire.

His biography is that of a quester who finally has found his chance.

As a teenager, he said, he wrote poetry and soon found out that "you could not write such poems as mine and get them published there."

So he worked as a truck driver for 10 years before deciding to get a university education and, as a translator, to bring the thoughts of Western writers to Soviet readers. His quiet form of subversion was to choose works that he thought indirectly exposed the flaws of the Communist regime here.

He was reared as an atheist by atheistic parents, but he decided eight years ago that "something was lacking in my life," he said. He now feels he has found that something in the Russian Orthodox religion. In speaking of those convictions, he includes the caveat that like so many determined believers, he is plagued by doubt.

"I am sure that without believing, people cannot be just," he said. "They haven't such things as 'you must' and 'you must not.' Sergei (Khodorovich) also thought like me. Because of this, we became friends."

Kistiyakovsky spoke of Khodorovich, 42, a mathematician, with reverence, occasionally even quoting him. He said that some months ago, when Khodorovich's arrest seemed imminent, he offered to take his place at the Solzhenitsyn Fund and that the informal succession was arranged.

His wife and daughter, 17, supported his decision, he said, but he has not told his parents for fear of worrying them.

Last week, Kistiyakovsky issued a formal statement defending Khodorovich and the fund and announcing his new role. He circulated the statement among foreign correspondents to serve as a signal to Solzhenitsyn

CONTINUED